OTTOMAN MANGALIA – SOME NOTES

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Abstract: *The article discusses the Esmahan Sultan Mosque in connection to the tombstone inscriptions from the building's courtyard. Using as a starting point a summary table with the names and details of the deceased, the authors will refer to the demographic situation of the city during the 17th – 19th centuries, highlighting the consequences of the Russian-Turkish conflicts of the 19th century on the evolution of the population. As a historical source, there will be presented Ottoman maps used during the 19th century, showing the city of Mangalia and the main roads in the area of southern Dobrudja. The paper ends with the presentation of the plan and brief description of the oldest house in Mangalia, owned by the merchant Mehmet Hagi Ismail at the end of the 18th century.*

Rezumat: *Articolul prezintă câteva informații despre Moscheea Esmahan Sultan, referitoare la inscripțiile aflate pe pietrele de mormânt din curtea edificiului. Pe baza tabelului rezumativ cu numele și datele despre defuncți, autorii vor discuta succint situația demografică a orașului în sec. XVII-XIX, evidențiind consecințele conflictelor ruso-turce din sec. al XIX-lea asupra evoluției numărului locuitorilor. Legat de această tematică, sunt prezentate hărți otomane din sec. al XIX-lea care menționează orașul Mangalia și drumurile principale din această zonă a Dobrogei de sud. La finalul articolului prezentăm planul și descrierea sumară a celei mai vechi locuințe din Mangalia, casa negustorului Mehmet Hagi Ismail, datată la sfârșitul sec. al XVIII-lea.*

Keywords: *Esmahan Sultan Mosque, house of the merchant Mehmet Hagi Ismail.*
Cuvinte cheie: *Moscheea Esmahan Sultan, casa negustorului Mehmet Hagi Ismail.*

INTRODUCTION

A city with a rich history, Mangalia harmoniously combines Greek, Roman and Ottoman heritage. Founded by Dorian colonists from Heraclea Pontike, the city developed over the centuries and was integrated into the Roman Empire. Following the attacks of the migratory peoples that put an end to the Roman civilization in Dobruja, the city ceases to exist. The return to life of the settlement took place after a long break, in the conditions of the return of the Byzantine Empire to the Lower Danube. The Ottoman conquest of the land between the Danube and the Black Sea represented a new stage of development, now the new name appearing – Mangalia, and the Turkish-Tatar colonizations changed the ethnic aspect of the city, giving it its oriental character, which has been partially preserved until our days.

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The article discusses the demographic situation of the city during the 17th-19th centuries, based on information about the context of the foundation of the Esmahan Sultan Mosque and the inscriptions on the tombstones in the courtyard of the monument; a series of Ottoman maps mentioning the town of Mangalia and the main roads in southern Dobrogea; and the description of the house of the merchant Mehmet Hagi Ismail, the oldest house in Mangalia, preserved to this day.

ESMAHAN SULTAN MOSQUE

Esmahan Sultan mosque, situated in Mangalia, is thought to be the oldest muslim worship place in Romania, listed as such in the List of Historical Monuments from Romania.[1] The Ottoman documents call it *Esmâ Sultan Câmii* (Esma Sultan Mosque), built under the patronage of princess Esmahan Gevher. The name of the princess is documented in the Ottoman archives as „Esmâ Sultan”. She was born in 1544, daughter of Sultan Selim II and Nurbanu (Cecilia Vernier-Baffo, descendant of a reknown Venetian family), granddaughter of Suleyman the Magnificent and Hürrem Sultan (Roxelana or Aleksandra Lisowska). People close to her viewed the princess as an intelligent and highly educated woman. At the age of 17, she was married away to the grand vizier Sokollu Mehmet Pasha (1505-1579). After the death of Sultan Suleyman, the family moves to Istanbul where Sokollu Mehmet Pasha becomes a very important stateman with a great deal of influence. Sokollu Mehmet Pasha was born around 1505 in the Sokol Castle in Bosnia, in a highly regarded aristocratic family. The Sokollu family originates from the Sokolovici village in Bosnia and its members rose through the ranks thanks to the "devshirme" system, occupying high positions in the Ottoman Empire. The most important member of this family was Sokollu Mehmet Pasha. He was taken away from his native village relatively late, around the age of 16 to 18 years old, and he received a very thorough education at Edirne and Topkapi palaces, being noted for his organisational skills. In 1549, he becomes Governor of Rumelia and as such, he creates a large influence network consisting of his family members, countrymen and trusted servants, all promoted to key positions in the Ottoman administration, to which he also added the connections to the western merchants, connections created through his wife and his mother-in-law, Nurbanu.

He had a long career in the imperial administration, becoming grand admiral in 1546 and grand vizier in 1565.[2] During Selim II's reign, he was considered the real ruler of the Empire; but under Murad III, although the sultan held him in high regard

[1] Position 605 in the List of historical monuments code CT-II-a-A-02901, Mangalia, no. 1, Oituz street, but wrongly dated to 1590, after the death of Princess Esmahan in 1585.

[2] Goodwin 1971, 271-272; Șeyban 2010, 389.

due to his abilities and experience, the power is gradually transferred back from the grand vizier to the sultan and his favourites while the Sokollu family members started to lose their positions.[3] Although Sokollu Mehmet Pasha held his position as grand vizier, his influence was considerably diminished. On the 11th of October 1579, he is injured by a dervish and he passes away.

Among the edifices built under the patronage of Sokollu Mehmet Pasha and his wife Esmahan Gehver we must mention the mosque built in Mangalia between 1573 and 1575, historically attributed to princess Esmahan and dedicated to the memory of sultan Selim II, her father[4]. After the death of Sokollu Mehmet Pasha, the princess is remarried to Kalaylikoz Ali Pasha in 1580 and she dies five years later[5]. Contemporary documents mention princess Esmahan/Ismihan's, daughter of Selim II (1566-1574) "vakâf" at Mangalia[6], a pious foundation[7] that had as main role the maintenance of the town's mosque but also adminstrating a large agricultural land.[8] This institution, aside from its religious purpose, was also an education center[9], where the "imams", well trained theologists, educated in the capital of the Ottoman Empire, were teaching the Quran and islamic law.[10] According to the Ottoman tradition, the life of the town had this mosque at its center, the mosque being surrounded by public buildings like the public bath, the school and the administrative buildings.[11] The mosque is situated south-west of the Roman-Byzantine city wall and the south gate, partially preserved under the Scala-President hotel (currently renamed New Belvedere Hotel, situated at no. 6 Teilor Street in Mangalia). Around the mosque, a large cemetery was gradually developed, reserved for the city's elite (Fig. 1). Cemeteries inside the city were generally located around mosques. Initially, these burials required the permission of the high authority, but later, after the 18th century, permission to be buried in a cemetery belonging to a "vakâf" was obtained from its administrators, which greatly increased the number of burials within the walls. These cemeteries enjoyed great prestige.[12] The epitaphs inscribed on the tombstones located in the mosque's yard were recently published.[13]

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3 Ágoston, Masters 2009, 535-536.
4 Șachir 2018; Goodwin 1971, 271-272.
5 Alderson 1956, table XXXI.
6 Other vakâfs belonging to Princess Esmahan are mentioned in Radushev, Ivanova, Kovachev 2003, no. 47, 222, 270, 290, 293, 294.
7 Moutafchieva 1981, *passim*; Svetlana Ivanova in Radushev, Ivanova, Kovachev 2003, 11-50.
8 Gemil 2004, 68.
9 Ilhan 1994, 278.
10 *Călători Străini* 6, 381; Ilhan 1994, 280-281.
11 Şerban, Şerban 1977, 273.
12 Eldem 2005, 20.
13 Şeyban 2010, 389-420.

There are 47 tombstones, but fragments discovered in the mosque's yard suggest there were actually more tombs than that. For some of the tombstones, ancient column fragments were re-purposed. There were 32 epitaphs inscribed tombstones identified until today, dated between 1585 and 1870.[14] The location of the graves from no. 48 to 57 could not be determined (Table 1; Fig. 1).

Table 1. Table with names and date of death (summary after Șeyban 2010, 395-420).

Tomb's number	The deceased's name	Decease date
5	Mufti Ali Efendi	1755
6	Seyyid Ahmet Aga, son of Seyyid Haci Ibrahim	18th of July 1804
7	Ali Şah Ağazâde daughter of Muhammed Ağa	-
8	-	8th of October 1814
9	Pazarbaşı Hacı Mustafa Ağa	1760
10	Hacı Ali (or Aliş) son of Hurşid Beg	1870
12	Zîroğlu Seyyid Osman Ağa	1821
13	Ağası Seyyid Mustafa Ağa, serdengeçti[15], son of Serturnayî Osman Ağa	13th of March 1824
15	Abdülkerîmzâde Osman Alemdar Ağa	1809
19	Hacı Alişân	-
20	Hacı İbrahim Ağazâde Haseki	5th of December1802
22	Emîne Hâtun, wife of Hacı Alişan	27th of August 1805
23	Hüseyin Alemdar, fiul lui Eyüp	1787
26	Mustafa Beşe	1613
28	Kavuklu Hacı Balâzâde Serdengeçti Agası Ali Ağa	27th of March1766
29	Osman Marûfî Efendi, son of İbrahim Efendi	31st of October 1867
32	Hatîce Hanım, daughter of İbrahim Ağa	1834
42	Berul'lu Hüseyin Ağa	-
43	-	1618
45	Mehmet Pașa	1585
46	Osman Ağa	1741
47	Ümmühân	1671
48	Seyyid Hacı İbrahim Ağa	14th of November 1769
49	-	-
50	Ahmet, son of Receb	-
51	-	-
52	-	1791
53	Alemdarzâde Süleyman Ağa	1822
54	Ümmügülsüm Hanım, wife of Emîn Ağa, daughter of Hacı İshak Ağa	1816
55	Ümmügülsüm Hanım	1794
56	Hafiz, Hacı Süleyman Ağa	August 1715
57	Subaşı Hüseyin Ağa, son of Mustafa	11th of June 1668

[14] Șeyban 2010, *passim*.

[15] Serdengeçti is a title given to soldiers who undertake suicide missions.

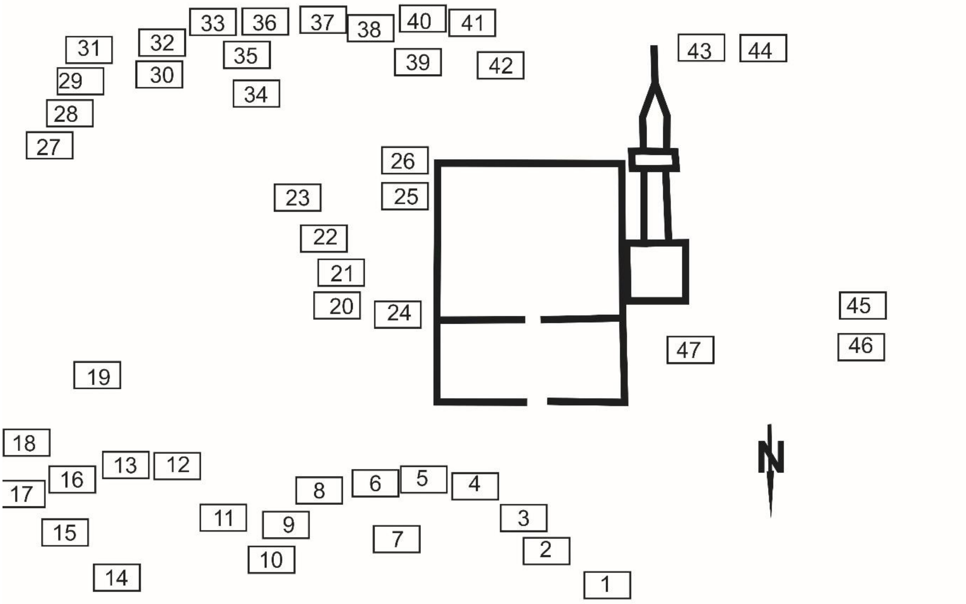


Fig. 1. The Mosque and the location of the graves in the cemetery (after Şeyban 2010, 393).

POPULATION OF MANGALIA

Regarding the population of Mangalia during this time, an Ottoman registry for the 1668-1669 fiscal year mentions a number of 172 ½ fiscal units, *cizye hanesi*, in Mangalia, consisting of non-muslim families who were paying *cizye*, a number comparable to other settlements from Dobrogea like for example Harsova (179) or Karasu (171).[16] Dobruja's population at that time was estimated to be around 300,000 to 350,000 inhabitants with a density of 12 to 15 people per square kilometer.[17]

Past the second half of the 18th century and especially during the 19th century the population was affected by the Russian-Turkish wars, the military operations that took place in this region causing a severe demographic decline comparing to the previous centuries when foreign travelers were describing Dobruja as a flourishing region. A census from 1830/1831 registers a number on 746 inhabitants at Mangalia, including 694 muslims, 15 non-muslims and 15 gypsies[18] (according to the Ottoman legislation only the male inhabitants were registered so in reality the population was higher with the inclusion of female and underage inhabitants). Another census performed in 1844 mentions 435 muslims, 9 non-muslims, a total of 451 people, a 295 decline compared to

[16] Gemil 2004, 54.

[17] Gemil 2004, 61.

[18] Kemal 2002, 229.

the previous 1830/1831 census which indicates a massive depopulation. Overall, in Dobrudja there is a decline in population, registered by census, from 28469 households to just 8260 households. Averaging five people per household, we can approximate that Dobrudja's population in 1844 was of around 41,300 people.[19]

At the half mark of the 19th century, according to the data registered by Ion Ionescu de la Brad, Mangalia kaza consisted of 398 households, divided in 35 villages.[20] About the town itself, the Romanian agronomist was noting that "the town of Mangalia, the capital of the *kaza* with the same name, was situated on the Black Sea's shore and has no more than 80 homes occupied by Turks and 5 *raias*; through its port only small transactions are conducted. From all the 40,000 kilograms that the *kaza* of Mangalia produces, there are only 7-8 ships per year loading here"[21], this underlining the desolate state the town was in. In 1877, the town is burnt and ransacked by the retreating Ottoman army, but later on, during the Russian administration (1877-1878) some of the population returns, being estimated at 1600 people.[22]

A report written by the British consul A. H. Layard in 1878 shows for the kaza of Mangalia a number of 75 villages with 5930 muslims and 499 non-muslims, the situation being a consequence of the military conflicts and political unrest during the 19th century, finalized in 1878 when Dobruja is reincorporated in the Romanian state.[23]

MAPS WITH THE REPRESENTATION OF THE CITY OF MANGALIA FROM THE OTTOMAN PERIOD

Recently, a series of maps from the Ottoman period of Dobrogea were published, maps that can be corelated with the information from the western cartography, presented in a previous article.[24] From this collection, we mention four maps that include the town of Mangalia. Map no. 2, drawn by Piri Reis, the famous Ottoman cartograph who lived in the 16th century, mentions at number 16 the name of the town transcribed in Osman Turkish as Mankalya, situated at the mouth of Naxos River with its two affluents.[25] Map number 18, a map of Bulgaria, Romanian Country, Moldavia and Russia, made in Istanbul in the 19th century, mentions at number 49 Mangalia's name written as Mankaliya, at the mouth of the aforementioned river, and it depicts

19 Büyükbaş 2006, 72, table 8.
20 Ionescu de la Brad 1879, 35.
21 Ionescu de la Brad 1879, 43-44.
22 Georgescu, Lascu 1995, 17.
23 Köse 2019, 274, table 16.
24 Radu 2013, 229-238.
25 Coman, Yenikale 2015, 18-19.

the roads from the town along the Black Sea's coast. One of these roads connected Mangalia to Varna, another road went towards Balcic, and another important road with 2 branches reached Pazargik/Bazargik (today Dobrici, Bulgaria), an important city in southern Dobrogea.[26] Map number 21, a map of the Balkan Peninsula made by Osman Mükerrem in Istanbul in the 19th century, at number 58 shows Mangalia (Mangalya) and the roads connecting it to the urban centers of Dobrogea: the road to Pazargik/Bazargic (today Dobrici, Bulgaria), and the road to Cavarna with 2 branches, via Cape Sabla and Cape Caliacra.[27] Map number 22, the Map of the High War Quarters of Rumelia, Bulgaria, Serbia and Montenegro and Greece, published also in Istanbul in the 19th century, mentions Mangalia/Mangalya at number 9, but without further details.[28] We can notice how the name of the town changes with time, getting closer and closer to its current form: Mankalya, Mankaliya, Mangalya.

THE MEHMET HAGI ISMAIL HOUSE

The oldest house preserved in Mangalia is the home of the merchant Mehmet Hagi Ismail[29], dating from the end of the 18th century, a house that features an interesting mix of Oriental and Balkan features (Fig. 2-4). The house is large, but with low ceiling, its height varying between 2.10 m and 2.35 m, and is split according to the Ottoman tradition between 2 levels (ground level and a first storey), resulting in two separate living quarters, the upper one being reserved for the women of the house, and including a porch and a gazebo. The first floor is divided in two symmetric parts, featuring four rooms, all connected by doors that open to a porch created by reducing the size of the two middle rooms. The gazebo and the staircase are placed on the exterior of the building. The porch and the gazebo are adjacent, forming one larger space reserved for women; for privacy reasons, this space was enclosed using wood planks. In the blueprint drawn by Grigore Ionescu, the gazebo had a main window, protected the same way, with wood planks, but that screen was not preserved. From the porch, the acces to the ground floor was made through a trap door and an almost vertical staircase. On this ground level, there were the rooms reserved for the head of the house, the main entry to this level being through an opening placed under the porch, slightly larger today than it originally was. This part of the house consists of a

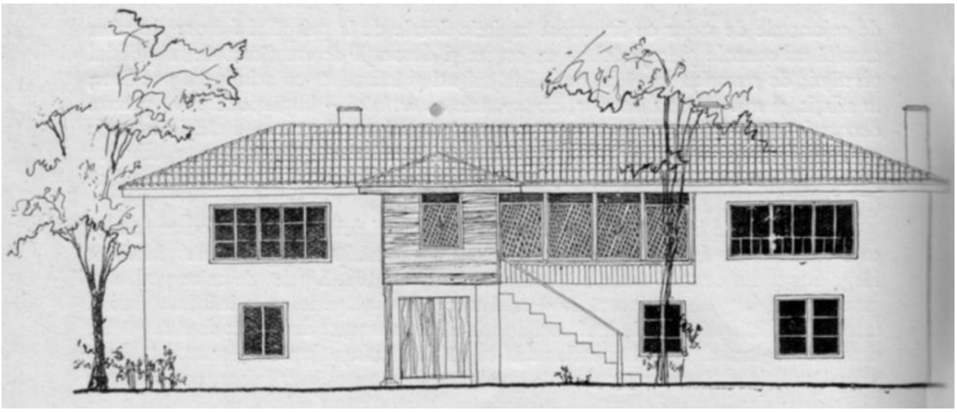
[26] Coman, Yenikale 2015, 86-87.

[27] Coman, Yenikale 2015, 99-101.

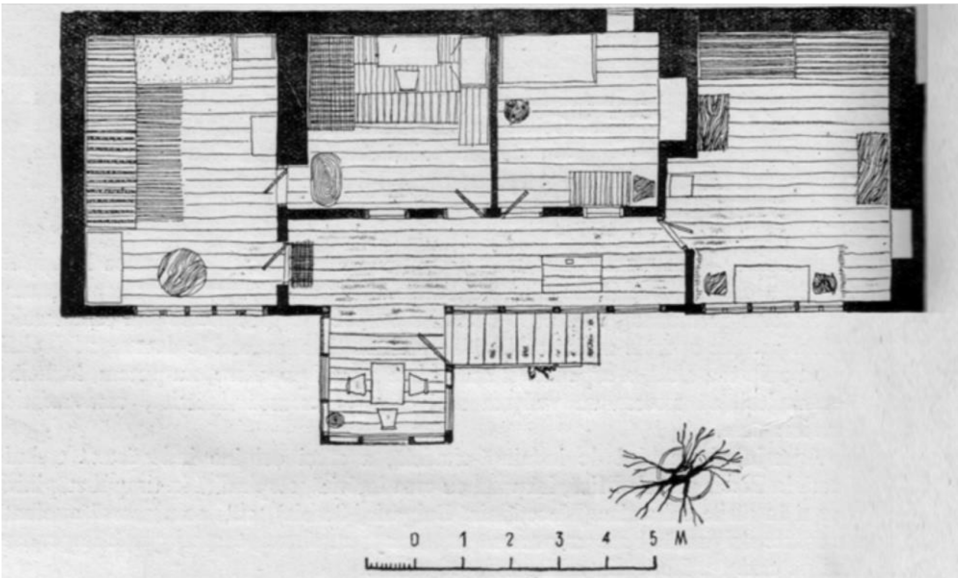
[28] Coman, Yenikale 2015, 103-105.

[29] Position 602 in the List of Historical Monuments, code CT-II-m-A-02897, Mangalia, no. 12 Delfinului street.

large room featuring a fireplace flanked by two smaller rooms, one of which was serving as a Turkish bath. The roof was low and made of tiles (Fig. 2/A-B).[30]



A



B

Fig. 2. The Mehmet Hagi Ismail house: A. main façade; B. blueprint (after Ionescu 1957, 204, fig. 158).

[30] Ionescu 1957, 203, fig. 158.



Fig. 3. The Mehmet Hagi Ismail house – 2006 (after Agarici *et alii* 2006).



Fig. 4. The Mehmet Hagi Ismail house as it currently looks (photo taken by the author in 2019)

CONCLUSIONS

According to information provided by Evliya Çelebi, the city was conquered by Edje-Iakuboglu Umurdja during the reign of Baiazid I Yıldırım (1389-1402), who destroyed the fortress.[31] Later, the city developed due to Turkish and Tartar colonization in Crimea, and acquired the characteristic features of the Ottoman Balkan city: the lack of a defensive wall, which determined a certain freedom in the random expansion of the city; an irregular plan with small and narrow streets; the sinuous route of the

[31] *Călători străini*, 6, 380.

streets, which sometimes clogs; a densely populated center around a mosque; and a suburb with large spaces between houses, houses that have a garden in front of them. From a topographical point of view, the city develops to the north and west, avoiding the ruins of the Roman and perhaps medieval fortifications, partially overlapping a rarefied dwelling of the Hellenistic era. However, there is a certain continuity with the previous period: the mosque is located in the sacred area of the ancient Callatis, which proves the preservation of the special character of this area. Thus, during the Ottoman period, the city of Mangalia is part of the series of Balkan cities of the „Turko-Balkan type"[32] that developed in the territory occupied by the Ottomans.

[32] Piron 2008, 146.

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